

Dear Representative Gentile, Senator Meyer and honorable members of the Environment Committee,

Please **support S.B. 445, the humane sourcing** of pet shop dogs and **the phase out of the retail sale** of dogs in pet shops.

Do I think Connecticut pet shops can guarantee the humane sourcing of their dogs? No. The reason I support legislation.

- 1) Animal cruelty: The public would not support the commercial breeding industry given the facts.
- 2) Consumer protection: Consumers deserve to know the truth about the product they are buying.
- 3) Freedom of speech: My right to disclose *the truth* without threat of a lawsuit

During the Fairfield Task Force meeting, Mr. Edmund Foucault of All Pets Club was asked if he still used *Dots Little Doggies* as a supplier. The facility houses close to 1,000 dogs and is well known for numerous violations. Mr. Sewell of PIJAC is always quick to point out that they are not direct violations. I challenge him, and the pet shop owners to **list the indirect violations and let the public decide** whether they're cruel. Mr. Foucault sat before the task force, and a hundred members of the public, and denied that he still used *Dots Little Doggies*. He said, "They hadn't used them since June" which was just before the Branford public hearing. The day of the Task Force meeting (Oct 2013) I'd gone to his Branford store, because I'd heard several dogs appeared sick. There was one dog in particular, I was very concerned about. However, as I scanned the breeder information on the dogs, I noticed their names were not listed. I found this curious, and asked my husband, to go to the Wallingford store to compare the listings. The breeders in that store were listed by name and town. There in black and white was *Dots Little Doggies* with a date stamp of September 2013. We have a cell phone picture of it. I also recorded that task force meeting. Ignorance is no defense and intentionally misleading the public is consumer fraud.

There are four issues going on here.

- 1) Animal cruelty. After viewing **hundreds of USDA reports** related to **Connecticut's suppliers**, I am absolutely sure the public would not support this practice.
- 2) Consumer protection. Consumers have rights too. They deserve to know the truth about the product they are buying. If Mr. Foucault's testimony is any indication as to **the**

transparency of the pet shop practices we as consumers had better beware.

3) Freedom of speech. I attempted to air a Community TV production about the puppy mill industry in Branford. The video was based on USDA reports, Veterinary research and the history of puppy mills. **The Town of Branford was immediately threatened with a law suit by All Pets Club. I was sent a cease and desist letter by the town's attorney.** That TV production was pure truth. **Not one word, one fact or one sentence was an untruth.** And I will swear to almighty God on this. Where are my rights to free speech? Why when presenting a public service about a cruel industry was I was threatened immediately by a law suit? The pet industry is a \$54 billion dollar a year industry, and if they want to **silence me** they have a great deal of ammunition. Perhaps that's why this horrible practice has continued **for 65 years.** Those of us who have tried to alert the public are immediately threatened with a law suit. **What are you so afraid of? Why worry if you have nothing to hide?** That kind of overreaction can only mean one thing.

4) The Animal Welfare Act constitutes weak standards that are poorly enforced by the USDA. The public given the facts about the weak standards and yearly visits by the USDA would not support this industry and we shouldn't either.

We need to end this now. Do the right thing for the animals who can't speak for themselves. Protect the consumer. Protect our right as US citizens to speak the truth. This is America. I implore you to support this legislation for all the above reasons.

Sincerely,

Lori Nicholson

Branford Connecticut